***Daldinia concentrica* Ces. & de Not. as a foodplant of *Apomyelois bistriatella* (Hulst) ssp. *subcognata* Rag. (Lep.:Pyralidae)**

Bob Heckford's note (*Ent.Rec.* **110**: 82-83) describes his experiences with *A.bistriatella subcognata* (=*neophanes* Durrant), which he bred from *Daldinia* growing on burnt gorse. This is consistent with the life history descriptions found in the literature – although it has to be said that few of these refer to first hand observations.

Virtually all published material refers to the fungus as *Daldinia concentrica*, in all probability because it is the most obviously recognisable species of this Ascomycete, a taxonomically difficult group. Heckford draws our attention to the fact that the species on burnt gorse (and probably other burnt substrates) is the smaller *Daldinia vernicosa* (Schw.) Ces. & de Not., with *D. concentrica* being restricted to unburned hosts. He further suggests that the larva of *A.bistriatella* is restricted to burnt hosts, and by implication to *Daldinia vernicosa*. The literature, and my own experience would suggest that the moth has a wider habitat and host range.

Meyrick (1928. *A revised handbook of British Lepidoptera*. London.) seems to have been the first to have established the link, describing a putative larva as "... feeding ... on globular black fungus growing on the stems of *Ulex* ..."; Stan Wakely (1935. *Entomologist* **68**:137-138), tracked down a specimen bred in 1917 from *Daldinia*, but "... definitely not growing on *Ulex* ...".

In Denmark, the moth is found in boggy heathland, and has been bred from *Daldinia tuburosa* (Palm, 1986. *Nordeuropas Pyralider*. Danmarks dyreliv Bind 2. Kobenhavn). Emmet (1988. *A field guide to the smaller British Lepidoptera*) cites "*Daldinia concentrica* growing on dead birch, less often on gorse or other plants, especially on burnt stems." The author has taken the moth a number of times at light near Orpington, on chalk. The light trap is some miles distant from any heathland habitat, although *Daldinia* does occur on the odd ash tree locally.

I have bred *A.bistriatella* from *Daldinia concentrica* growing on dead birch on a number of occasions. The habitat is relict acid heathland with heather, gorse and mature stands of birch. Serious fires are rare, and burnt gorse is difficult to find. The birch woodland contains many dead and dying specimens and *Daldinia concentrica* appears to be a secondary coloniser of birch killed by *Polyporus* fungi, and larvae have been found in *Daldinia* growing on erect trunks that have broken two to three meters from the ground. Larvae in this location are very scarce, and in some years it has not been possible to locate a single specimen. There are, however, plenty of beetles as compensation, and I have bred *Biphyllus lunatus* Fab., *Malachius bipustulatus* L., and *Synchita humeralis* Fab. as "by-products"!

There seems to be no doubt that this moth feeds on more than one species of *Daldinia*, and in different habitats, even if the majority of records come from burnt wood.– Paul Sokoloff, 4 Steep Close, Green Street Green, Orpington, Kent BR6 6DS.